Erich Fromm

marx's concept of man

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MILESTONES OF THOUGHT

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MARX'S CONCEPT OF MAN

With a translation from Marx's
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other objectively given conditions) and the existing social organization. When a mode of production or social organization hampers, rather than furthers, the given productive forces, a society, if it is not to collapse, will choose such forms of production as fit the new set of productive forces and develop them. The evolution of man, in all history, is characterized by man's struggle with nature. At one point of history (and according to Marx in the near future), man will have developed the productive sources of nature to such an extent that the antagonism between man and nature can be eventually solved. At this point "the prehistory of man" will come to a close and truly human history will begin.

3

THE PROBLEM OF CONSCIOUSNESS, SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND THE USE OF FORCE

A problem of the greatest importance is raised in the passage just quoted, that of human consciousness. The crucial statement is: "It is not consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." Marx gave a fuller statement with regard to the problem of consciousness in *German Ideology:*

"The fact is, therefore, that definite individuals who are productively active in a definite way enter into these definite social and political relations. Empirical observations must in each separate instance bring out empirically, and without any mystification and speculation, the connection of the social and political structure

with production. The social structure and the State are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals, but of individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people's imagination, but as they really are; i.e., as they are effective, produce materially, and are active under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions independent of their will.

"The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct affiux from their material behavior. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of the politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc.—real, active men, as they are conditioned by the definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men in their actual life-process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a *camera obscura,** this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process."[1]

In the first place, it should be noted that Marx, like Spinoza and later Freud, believed that most of what men

* An instrument perfected in the late Middle Ages, to throw, by means of mirrors, an image of a scene on a plane surface. It was widely used by artists to establish the correct proportions of a natural object or scene. The image appeared on the paper inverted, though the later use of a lens corrected this.

[1] *German Ideology,* l.c. p. 13-4.

consciously think is "false" consciousness, is ideology and rationalization; that the true mainsprings of man's actions are unconscious to him. According to Freud, they are rooted in man's libidinal strivings; according to Marx, they are rooted in the whole social organization of man which directs his consciousness in certain directions and blocks him from being aware of certain facts and experiences.[2]

It is important to recognize that this theory does not pretend that ideas or ideals are not real or not potent. Marx speaks of awareness, not of ideals. It is exactly the blindness of man's conscious thought which prevents him from being aware of his true human needs, and of ideals which are rooted in them. Only if false consciousness is transformed into true consciousness, that is, only if we are aware of reality, rather than distorting it by

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[2] Cf. my article in Suzuki, Fromm, de Martino, *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1960. Cf. also Marx's statement: "Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness, as it exists for other men, and for that reason is really beginning to exist for me personally as well; for language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity of intercourse with other men. Where there exists a relationship, it exists for me: the animal has no 'relations' with anything, cannot have any. For the animal, its relation to others does not exist as a relation. Consciousness is therefore from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all. Consciousness is at first, of course, merely consciousness concerning the immediate sensuous environment and consciousness of the limited connection with other persons and things outside the individual who is growing self-conscious. At the same time it is consciousness of nature, which first appears to men as a completely alien, all-powerful and unassailable force, with which men's relations are purely animal and by which they are overawed like beasts; it is thus a purely animal consciousness of nature (natural religion)."—*German Ideology*, l.c. p. 19.

rationalizations and fictions, can we also become aware of our real and true human needs.

It should also be noted that for Marx science itself and all powers inherent in man are part of the productive forces which interact with the forces of nature. Even as far as the influence of ideas on human evolution is concerned, Marx was by no means as oblivious to their power as the popular interpretation of his work makes it appear. His argument was not against ideas, but against ideas which were not rooted in the human and social reality, which were not, to use Hegel's term, "a real possibility." Most of all, he never forgot that not only do circumstances make man; man also makes circumstances. The following passage should make clear how erroneous it is to interpret Marx as if he, like many philosophers of the enlightenment and many sociologists of today, gave man a passive role in the historical process, as if he saw him as the passive object of circumstances:

"The materialistic doctrine [in contrast to Marx's view] concerning the changing of circumstances and education *forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator himself must be educated.* This doctrine has therefore to divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society [as a whole].

"The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can only be comprehended and rationally understood as *revolutionary practice.*"[3]

[3] *German Ideology,* l.c. p. 197-8 [My italics—E.F.] Cf. also Engels' famous letter to Mehring (July 14, 1893) in which he states that Marx and he "had neglected [by emphasizing the formal aspects of the relationship between the socio-economic structure and ideology to study] *the manner and mode of how ideas come into being.*"

The last concept, that of "revolutionary practice", leads us to one of the most disputed concepts in Marx's philosophy, that of *force*. First of all, it should be noted how peculiar it is that the Western democracies should feel such indignation about a theory claiming that society can be transformed by the forceful seizure of political power. The idea of political revolution by force is not at all a Marxist idea; it has been the idea of bourgeois society during the last three hundred years. Western democracy is the daughter of the great English, French and American revolutions; the Russian revolution of February, 1917, and the German revolution of 1918 were warmly greeted by the West, despite the fact that they used force. It is clear that indignation against the use of force, as it exists in the Western world today, depends on who uses force, and against whom. Every war is based on force; even democratic government is based on the principle of force, which permits the majority to use force against a minority, if it is necessary for the continuation of the status quo. Indignation against force is authentic only from a pacifist standpoint, which holds that force is either absolutely wrong, or that aside from the case of the most immediate defense its use never leads to a change for the better.

However, it is not sufficient to show that Marx's idea of forceful revolution (from which he excluded as possibilities England and the United States) was in the middle-class tradition; it must be emphasized that Marx's theory constituted an important improvement over the middle-class view, an improvement rooted in his whole theory of history.

Marx saw that political force cannot produce anything for which there has been no preparation in the social and political process. Hence that force, if at all necessary, can give, so to speak, only the last push to a

development which has virtually already taken place, but it can never produce anything truly new. "Force," he said, "is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one."[4] It is exactly one of his great insights that Marx transcends the traditional middle-class concept—he did *not* believe in the creative power of force, in the idea that political force of itself could create a new social order. For this reason, force, for Marx, could have at most only a transitory significance, never the role of a permanent element in the transformation of society.

4
THE NATURE OF MAN

1. *The Concept of Human Nature*

Marx did not believe, as do many contemporary sociologists and psychologists, that there is no such thing as the nature of man; that man at birth is like a blank sheet of paper, on which the culture writes its text. Quite in contrast to this sociological relativism, Marx started out with the idea that man *qua man* is a recognizable and ascertainable entity; that man can be defined as man not only biologically, anatomically and physiologically, but also psychologically.

Of course, Marx was never tempted to assume that "human nature" was identical with that particular expression of human nature prevalent in his own society. In arguing against Bentham, Marx said: "To know what is useful for a dog, one must study dog nature. This nature itself is not to be deduced from the principle of utility.

[4] *Capital I*, l.c., p. 824.

Applying this to man, he that would criticize all human acts, movements, relations, etc., by the principle of utility, *must first deal with human nature in general, and then with human nature as modified in each historical epoch.*"[1] It must be noted that this concept of human nature is not, for Marx—as it was not either for Hegel—an abstraction. It is the *essence* of man—in contrast to the various forms of his historical *existence*—and, as Marx said, "the essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each separate individual."[2] It must also be stated that this sentence from *Capital,* written by the "old Marx," shows the continuity of the concept of man's essence (Wesen) which the young Marx wrote about in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts.* He no longer used the *term* "essence" later on, as being abstract and unhistorical, but he clearly retained the notion of this essence in a more historical version, in the differentiation between "human nature in general" and "human nature as modified" with each historical period.

In line with this distinction between a general human nature and the specific expression of human nature in each culture, Marx distinguishes, as we have already mentioned above, two types of human drives and appetites: the *constant* or fixed ones, such as hunger and the sexual urge, which are an integral part of human nature, and which can be changed only in their form and the direction they take in various cultures, and the *"relative" appetites,* which are not an integral part of human nature but which "owe their origin to certain social structures and certain conditions of production and communication."[3] Marx gives as an example the needs produced

[1] *Capital I,* l.c., p. 668.

[2] *German Ideology,* l.c., p. 198.

[3] "Heilige Familie," *MEGA V,* p. 359. [My translation—E.F.]

by the capitalistic structure of society. "The need for money," he wrote in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, "is therefore the real need created by the modern economy, and the only need which it creates. . . . This is shown subjectively, partly in the fact that the expansion of production and of needs becomes an *ingenious* and always *calculating* subservience to inhuman, depraved, unnatural, and *imaginary* appetites."[4]

Man's potential, for Marx, is a given potential; man is, as it were, the human raw material which, as such, cannot be changed, just as the brain structure has remained the same since the dawn of history. Yet, man *does* change in the course of history; he develops himself; he transforms himself, he is the product of history; since *he* makes his history, he is his own product. History is the history of man's self-realization; it is nothing but the self-creation of man through the process of his work and his production: "the *whole of what is called world history* is nothing but the creation of man by human labor, and the emergence of nature for man; he therefore has the evident and irrefutable proof of his *self-creation*, of his own *origins*."[5]

2. *Man's self-activity*

Marx's concept of man is rooted in Hegel's thinking. Hegel begins with the insight that appearance and essence do not coincide. The task of the dialectical thinker is "to distinguish the essential from the apparent process of reality, and to grasp their relations."[6] Or, to put it differently, it is the problem of the relationship between es-

[4] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 141.
[5] *E.P. MSS.* p. 139.
[6] H. Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1941, p. 146.

sence and existence. In the process of existence, the essence is realized, and at the same time, existing means a return to the essence. "The world is an estranged and untrue world so long as man does not destroy its dead objectivity and recognize himself and his own life 'behind' the fixed form of things and laws. When he finally wins this *self-consciousness*, he is on his way not only to the truth of himself, but also of his world. And with the recognition goes the doing. He will try to put this truth into action, and *make* the world what it *essentially* is, namely, the fulfillment of man's self-consciousness."[7] For Hegel, knowledge is not obtained in the position of the subject-object split, in which the object is grasped as something separated from and opposed to the thinker. In order to *know* the world, man has to *make the world his own.* Man and things are in a constant transition from one *suchness* into another; hence "a thing is for itself only when it has posited (*gesetzt*) all its determinates and made them moments of its self-realization, and is thus, in all changing conditions, always 'returning to itself'."[8] In this process "entering into itself becomes essence." This essence, the unity of being, the identity throughout change is, according to Hegel, a process in which "everything copes with its inherent contradictions and unfolds itself as a result." "The essence is thus as much historical as ontological. The essential potentialities of things realize themselves in the same comprehensive process that establishes their existence. The essence can 'achieve' its existence when the potentialities of things have ripened in and through the conditions of reality. Hegel describes this process as the transition to actuality."[9] In contrast to

[7] Marcuse, l.c., p. 113.
[8] Marcuse, l.c., p. 142. Cf. Hegel, *Science and Logic*, Vol. I, p. 404.
[9] Marcuse, l.c., p. 149.

positivism, for Hegel "facts are facts only if related to that which is not yet fact and yet manifests itself in the given facts as a real possibility. Or, facts are what they are only as moments in a process that leads beyond them to that which is not yet fulfilled in fact."[10]

The culmination of all of Hegel's thinking is the concept of the potentialities inherent in a thing, of the dialectical process in which they manifest themselves, and the idea that this process is one of active movement of these potentialities. This emphasis on the active process within man is already to be found in the ethical system of Spinoza. For Spinoza, all affects were to be divided into passive affects (passions), through which man suffers and does not have an adequate idea of reality, and into active affects (actions) (generosity and fortitude) in which man is free and productive. Goethe, who like Hegel was influenced by Spinoza in many ways, developed the idea of man's productivity into a central point of his philosophical thinking. For him all decaying cultures are characterized by the tendency for pure subjectivity, while all progressive periods try to grasp the world as it is, by one's own subjectivity, but not separate from it.[11] He gives the example of the poet: "as long as he expresses only these few subjective sentences, he can not yet be called a poet, but as soon as he knows *how to appropriate the world for himself, and to express it*, he is a poet. Then he is inexhaustible, and can be ever new, while his purely subjective nature has exhausted itself soon and ceases to have anything to say."[12] "Man", says Goethe, "knows himself only inasmuch as he knows the

[10] Marcuse, l.c. p. 152.

[11] Cf. Goethe's conversation with Eckermann, January 29, 1826.

[12] Goethe, conversation with Eckermann on January 29, 1826. [My italics, and translation—E.F.]

world; he knows the world only within himself and he is aware of himself only within the world. Each new object truly recognized, opens up a new organ within ourselves."[13] Goethe gave the most poetic and powerful expression to the idea of human productivity in his *Faust.* Neither possession, nor power, nor sensuous satisfaction, Faust teaches, can fulfill man's desire for meaning in his life; he remains in all this separate from the whole, hence unhappy. Only in being productively active can man make sense of his life, and while he thus enjoys life, he is not greedily holding on to it. He has given up the greed for *having,* and is fulfilled by *being;* he is filled because he is empty; he *is* much, because he *has* little.[14] Hegel gave the most systematic and profound expression to the idea of the productive man, of the individual who is *he,* inasmuch as he is not passive-receptive, but actively related to the world; who is an individual only in this process of grasping the world productively, and thus making it his own. He expressed the idea quite poetically by saying that the subject wanting to bring a content to realization does so by "translating itself from the night of possibility into the day of actuality." For Hegel the development of all individual powers, capacities and potentialities is possible only by continuous action, never by sheer contemplation or receptivity. For Spinoza, Goethe, Hegel, as well as for Marx, man is alive only inasmuch as he is productive, inasmuch as he grasps the world outside of himself in the act of expressing his own specific human powers, and of grasping the world with these powers.

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[13] Quoted by K. Löwith, *Von Hegel zu Nietzsche,* W. Kohlhammer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1941, p. 24. [My translation—E.F.]

[14] Cf. the detailed description of the productive character orientation in E. Fromm, *Man for Himself,* Rinehart & Co., New York, 1947.

human, social object, created by man and destined for him . . . They [the senses] relate themselves to the thing for the sake of the thing, but the thing itself is an *objective human* relation to itself and to man, and vice versa. Need and enjoyment have thus lost their *egoistic* character, and nature has lost its mere *utility* by the fact that its utilization has become *human* utilization. (In effect, I can only relate myself in a human way to a thing when the thing is related in a human way to man.)"[22]

For Marx, "*Communism* is the *positive* abolition of *private property,*[23] of *human self-alienation,* and thus the real *appropriation* of human nature through and for man. It is, therefore, the return of man himself as a *social,* i. e., really human being, a complete and conscious return which assimilates all the wealth of pre-

[22] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 132. This last statement is one which is almost literally the same as has been made in Zen Buddhist thinking, as well as by Goethe. In fact, the thinking of Goethe, Hegel and Marx is closely related to the thinking of Zen. What is common to them is the idea that man overcomes the subject-object split; the object is an object, yet it ceases to be an object, and in this new approach man becomes one with the object, although he and it remain two. Man, in relating himself to the objective world humanly, overcomes self-alienation.

[23] By "private property" as used here and in other statements, Marx never refers to the private property of things for use (such as a house, a table, etc.) Marx refers to the property of the "propertied classes," that is, of the capitalist who, because he owns the means of production, can hire the property-less individual to work for him, under conditions the latter is forced to accept. "Private property" in Marx's usage, then, always refers to private *property within capitalist class society* and thus is a *social and historical category;* the term does not refer to things for use, as for instance, in a socialist society.

when it is directly eaten, drunk, worn, inhabited, etc., in short, *utilized* in some way. Although private property itself only conceives these various forms of possession as *means of life*, and the life for which they serve as means is the *life* of *private property*—labor and creation of capital. Thus *all* the physical and intellectual senses have been replaced by the simple alienation of *all* these senses; the sense of *having*. The human being had to be reduced to this absolute poverty in order to be able to give birth to all his inner wealth."[29]

Marx recognized that the science of capitalistic economy, despite its worldly and pleasure-seeking appearance, "is a truly moral science, the most moral of all sciences. Its principal thesis is the renunciation of life and of human needs. The less you eat, drink, buy books, go to the theatre or to balls, or to the public house [*Br.*, pub], and the less you think, love, theorize, sing, paint, fence, etc., the more you will be able to save and the *greater* will become your treasure which neither moth nor rust will corrupt—your *capital*. The less you *are*, the less you express your life, the more you *have*, the greater is your *alienated* life and the greater is the saving of your alienated being. Everything which the economist takes from you in the way of life and humanity, he restores to you in the form of *money* and *wealth*. And everything which you are unable to do, your money can do for you; it can eat, drink, go to the ball and to the theatre. It can acquire art, learning, historical treasures, political power; and it can travel. It *can* appropriate all these things for you, can purchase everything; it is the true *opulence*. But although it can do all this, it only *desires* to create itself, and to buy itself, for everything

[29] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 132.

else is subservient to it. When one owns the master, one also owns the servant, and one has no need of the master's servant. Thus all passions and activities must be submerged in *avarice*. The worker must have just what is necessary for him to want to live, and he must want to live only in order to have this."[30]

The aim of society, for Marx, is not the production of useful things as an aim in itself. One easily forgets, he says, "that the production of too many useful things results in too many *useless* people."[31] The contradictions between prodigality and thrift, luxury and abstinence, wealth and poverty, are only apparent because the truth is that all these antinomies are equivalent. It is particularly important to understand this position of Marx today, when both the Communist, and most of the Socialist parties, with some notable exceptions like the Indian, also Burmese and a number of European and American socialists, have accepted the principle which underlies all capitalist systems, namely, that maximum production and consumption are the unquestionable goals of society. One must of course not confuse the aim of overcoming the abysmal poverty which interferes with a dignified life, with the aim of an ever-increasing consumption, which has become the supreme value for both Capitalism and Krushchevism. Marx's position was quite clearly on the side of the conquest of poverty, and equally against consumption as a supreme end.

Independence and *freedom*, for Marx, are based on the act of self-creation. "A being does not regard himself as independent unless he is his own master, and he is only his own master when he owes his existence to him-

[30] *E.P. MSS.*, pp. 144-5.
[31] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 145.

self. A man who lives by the favor of another considers himself a dependent being. But I live completely by another person's favor when I owe to him not only the continuance of my life but also *its creation*; when he is its *source*. My life has necessarily such a cause outside itself if it is not my own creation."[32] Or, as Marx put it, man is independent only ". . . if he affirms his individuality as a total man in each of his relations to the world, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, thinking, willing, loving—in short, if he affirms and expresses all organs of his individuality," if he is not only free *from* but also free *to*.

For Marx the aim of socialism was the emancipation of man, and the emancipation of man was the same as his self-realization in the process of productive relatedness and oneness with man and nature. The aim of socialism was the development of the individual personality. What Marx would have thought of a system such as Soviet communism he expressed very clearly in a statement of what he called "crude communism," and which referred to certain communist ideas and practices of his time. This crude communism "appears in a double form; the domination of material property looms so large that it aims to destroy everything which is incapable of being possessed by everyone as private property. It wishes to eliminate talent, etc., by *force*. Immediate physical possession seems to it the unique goal of life and existence. The role of *worker* is not abolished but is extended to all men. The relation of private property remains the relation of the community to the world of things. Finally, this tendency to oppose general private property to private property is expressed in an animal form; *marriage* (which is incontestably a form of *exclusive private prop-*

[32] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 138.

erty) is contrasted with the community of women,[33] in which women become communal and common property. One may say that this idea of the *community of women* is the *open secret* of this entirely crude and unreflective communism. Just as women are to pass from marriage to universal prostitution, so the whole world of wealth (i.e., the objective being of man) is to pass to the relation of universal prostitution with the community. This communism, which negates the *personality* of man in every sphere, is only the logical expression of private property, which *is* this negation. Universal *envy* setting itself up as a power is only a camouflaged form of cupidity which reestablishes itself and satisfies itself in a different way. The thoughts of every individual private property are *at least* directed against any *wealthier* private property, in the form of envy and the desire to reduce everything to a common level; so that this envy and levelling in fact constitute the essence of competition. Crude communism is only the culmination of such envy and levelling-down on the basis of a *preconceived* minimum. How little this abolition of private property represents a genuine appropriation is shown by the abstract negation of the whole world of culture and civilization, and the regression to the *unnatural* simplicity of the poor and wantless individual who has not only not surpassed private property but has not yet even attained to it. The community is only a community of *work* and of *equality of wages* paid out by the communal capital, by the *community* as universal capitalist. The two sides of the relation are raised to a *supposed* universality; *labor* as a condition in which everyone is placed, and *capital*

[33] Marx refers here to speculations among certain eccentric communist thinkers of his time who thought that if everything is common property women should be too.

as the acknowledged universality and power of the community."[34]

Marx's whole concept of the self-realization of man can be fully understood only in connection with his concept of work. First of all, it must be noted that labor and capital were not at all for Marx only economic categories; they were anthropological categories, imbued with a value judgment which is rooted in his humanistic position. Capital, which is that which is accumulated, represents the past; labor, on the other hand is, or ought to be when it is free, the expression of life. "In bourgeois society," says Marx in the *Communist Manifesto*," . . . the past dominates the present. In communist society the present dominates the past. In bourgeois society, capital is independent and has individuality, while the living person is dependent and has no individuality." Here again, Marx follows the thought of Hegel, who understood labor as the "act of man's self-creation." Labor, to Marx, is an activity, not a commodity. Marx originally called man's function "self-activity," not labor, and spoke of the "abolition of labor" as the aim of socialism. Later, when he differentiated between free and alienated labor, he used the term "emancipation of labor."

"Labor is, in the first place, a process in which both man and nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material reactions between himself and nature. He opposes himself to nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature. He develops his slumbering

[34] *E.P. MSS.*, pp. 124-6.

powers and compels them to act in obedience to his sway. We are not now dealing with those primitive instinctive forms of labor that remind us of the mere animal. An immeasurable interval of time separates the state of things in which a man brings his labor power to market for sale as a commodity, from that state in which human labor was still in its first instinctive stage. We presuppose labor in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labor process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the laborer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realizes a purpose of his own that gives the law to his modus operandi, and to which he must subordinate his will. And this subordination is no mere momentary act. Besides the exertion of the bodily organs, the process demands that, during the whole operation, the workman's will be steadily in consonance with his purpose. This means close attention. The less he is attracted by the nature of the work, and the mode in which it is carried on, and the less, therefore, he enjoys it as something which gives play to his bodily and mental powers, the more close his attention is forced to be."[35]

Labor is the self-expression of man, an expression of his individual physical and mental powers. In this process of genuine activity man develops himself, becomes himself; work is not only a means to an end—the product—

[35] *Capital I*, l.c. p. 197-8.

but an end in itself, the meaningful expression of human energy; hence work is enjoyable.

Marx's central criticism of capitalism is not the injustice in the distribution of wealth; it is the perversion of labor into forced, alienated, meaningless labor, hence the transformation of man into a "crippled monstrosity." Marx's concept of labor as an expression of man's individuality is succinctly expressed in his vision of the complete abolition of the lifelong submersion of a man in one occupation. Since the aim of human development is that of the development of the total, universal man, man must be emancipated from the crippling influence of specialization. In all previous societies, Marx writes, man has been "a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; while in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic."[36]

There is no greater misunderstanding or misrepresentation of Marx than that which is to be found, implicitly or explicitly, in the thought of the Soviet Communists, the reformist socialists, and the capitalist opponents of socialism alike, all of whom assume that Marx wanted only the economic improvement of the working class, and that he wanted to abolish private property so that the worker would own what the capitalist now has. The truth is that for Marx the situation of a worker in a Rus-

[36] *German Ideology*, l.c. p. 22.

sian "socialist" factory, a British state-owned factory, or an American factory such as General Motors, would appear essentially the same. This, Marx expresses very clearly in the following:

"An enforced *increase in wages* (disregarding the other difficulties, and especially that such an anomaly could only be maintained by force) would be nothing more than a *better remuneration of slaves*, and would not restore, either to the worker or to the work, their human significance and worth.

"Even the *equality of incomes* which Proudhon demands would only change the relation of the present-day worker to his work into a relation of all men to work. Society would then be conceived as an abstract capitalist."[37]

The central theme of Marx is the transformation of alienated, meaningless labor into productive, free labor, not the better payment of alienated labor by a private or "abstract" state capitalism.

5

ALIENATION

The concept of the active, productive man who grasps and embraces the objective world with his own powers cannot be fully understood without the concept of the *negation of productivity: alienation.* For Marx the history of mankind is a history of the increasing development of man, and at the same time of increasing alienation. His concept of socialism is the emancipation from alienation, the return of man to himself, his self-realization.

[37] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 107.

Alienation (or "estrangement") means, for Marx, that man does *not* experience himself as the acting agent in his grasp of the world, but that the world (nature, others, and he himself) remain alien to him. They stand above and against him as objects, even though they may be objects of his own creation. Alienation is essentially experiencing the world and oneself passively, receptively, as the subject separated from the object.

The whole concept of alienation found its first expression in Western thought in the Old Testament concept of idolatry.[1] The essence of what the prophets call "idolatry" is not that man worships many gods instead of only one. It is that the idols are the work of man's own hands —they are things, and man bows down and worships things; worships that which he has created himself. In doing so he transforms himself into a thing. He transfers to the things of his creation the attributes of his own life, and instead of experiencing himself as the creating person, he is in touch with himself only by the worship of the idol. He has become estranged from his own life forces, from the wealth of his own potentialties, and is in touch with himself only in the indirect way of submission to life frozen in the idols.[2]

[1] The connection between alienation and idolatry has also been emphasized by Paul Tillich in *Der Mensch im Christentum und im Marxismus*, Düsseldorf, 1953, p. 14. Tillich also points out in another lecture, "Protestantische Vision," that the concept of alienation in substance is to be found also in Augustine's thinking. Löwith also has pointed out that what Marx fights against are not the gods, but the idols, [cf. *Von Hegel zu Nietzsche*, l.c. p. 378].

[2] This is, incidentally, also the psychology of the fanatic. He is empty, dead, depressed, but in order to compensate for the state of depression and inner deadness, he chooses an idol, be it the state, a party, an idea, the church, or God. He makes this idol into the absolute, and submits to it in an

The deadness and emptiness of the idol is expressed in the Old Testament: "Eyes they have and they do not see, ears they have and they do not hear," etc. The more man transfers his own powers to the idols, the poorer he himself becomes, and the more dependent on the idols, so that they permit him to redeem a small part of what was originally his. The idols can be a god-like figure, the state, the church, a person, possessions. Idolatry changes its objects; it is by no means to be found only in those forms in which the idol has a so-called religious meaning. Idolatry is always the worship of something into which man has put his own creative powers, and to which he now submits, instead of experiencing himself in his creative act. Among the many forms of alienation, the most frequent one is alienation in language. If I express a feeling with a word, let us say, if I say "I love you," the word is meant to be an indication of the reality which exists within myself, the power of my loving. The *word* "love" is meant to be a symbol of the *fact* love, but as soon as it is spoken it tends to assume a life of its own, it becomes a reality. I am under the illusion that the saying of the word is the equivalent of the experience, and soon I say the word and feel nothing, except the *thought* of love which the word expresses. The alienation of language shows the whole complexity of alienation. Language is one of the most precious human achievements; to avoid alienation by not speaking would be foolish—yet one must be always aware of the danger of the spoken word, that it threatens to substitute

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absolute way. In doing so his life attains meaning, and he finds excitement in the submission to the chosen idol. His excitement, however, does not stem from joy in productive relatedness; it is intense, yet cold excitement built upon inner deadness or, if one would want to put it symbolically, it is "burning ice."

itself for the living experience. The same holds true for all other achievements of man; ideas, art, any kind of man-made objects. They are man's creations; they are valuable aids for life, yet each one of them is also a trap, a temptation to confuse life with things, experience with artifacts, feeling with surrender and submission.

The thinkers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries criticized their age for its increasing rigidity, emptiness, and deadness. In Goethe's thinking the very same concept of productivity that is central in Spinoza as well as in Hegel and Marx, was a cornerstone. "The divine," he says, "is effective in that which is alive, but not in that which is dead. It is in that which is becoming and evolving, but not in that which is completed and rigid. That is why *reason*, in its tendency toward the divine, deals only with that which is becoming, and which is alive, while the *intellect* deals with that which is completed and rigid, in order to use it."[3]

We find similar criticisms in Schiller and Fichte, and then in Hegel and in Marx, who makes a general criticism that in his time "truth is without passion, and passion is without truth."[4]

Essentially the whole existentialist philosophy, from Kierkegaard on, is, as Paul Tillich puts it, "an over one-hundred-years-old movement of rebellion against the dehumanization of man in industrial society." Actually, the concept of alienation is, in nontheistic language, the equivalent of what in theistic language would be called "sin": man's relinquishment of himself, of God within himself.

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[3] Eckermann's conversation with Goethe, February 18, 1829, published in Leipzig, 1894, page 47. [My translation —E.F.]

[4] *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.*

The thinker who coined the concept of alienation was Hegel. To him the history of man was at the same time the history of man's alienation (Entfremdung). "What the mind really strives for," he wrote in *The Philosophy of History*, "is the realization of its notion; but in doing so it hides that goal from its own vision and is proud and well satisfied in this alienation from its own essence."[5] For Marx, as for Hegel, the concept of alienation is based on the distinction between existence and essence, on the fact that man's existence is alienated from his essence, that in reality he is not what he potentially is, or, to put it differently, that *he is not what he ought to be, and that he ought to be that which he could be.*

For Marx the process of alienation is expressed in work and in the division of labor. Work is for him the active relatedness of man to nature, the creation of a new world, including the creation of man himself. (Intellectual activity is of course, for Marx, always work, like manual or artistic activity.) But as private property and the division of labor develop, labor loses its character of being an expression of man's powers; labor and its products assume an existence separate from man, his will and his planning. "The object produced by labor, its product, now stands opposed to it as an *alien being*, as a *power independent* of the producer. The product of labor is labor which has been embodied in an object and turned into a physical thing; this product is an *objectification* of labor."[6] Labor is alienated because the work has ceased to be a part of the worker's nature and "consequently, he does not fulfill himself in his work but denies himself, has a feeling of misery rather than well-being, does not

[5] *The Philosophy of History*, translated by J. Sibree, The Colonial Press, New York, 1899.

[6] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 95.

develop freely his mental and physical energies but is physically exhausted and mentally debased. The worker therefore feels himself at home only during his leisure time, whereas at work he feels homeless."[7] Thus, in the act of production the relationship of the worker to his own activity is experienced "as something alien and not belonging to him, activity as suffering (passivity), strength as powerlessness, creation as emasculation."[8] While man thus becomes alienated from himself, the product of labor becomes "an alien object which dominates him. This relationship is at the same time the relationship to the sensuous external world, to natural objects, as an alien and hostile world."[9] Marx stresses two points: 1) in the process of work, and especially of work under the conditions of capitalism, man is estranged from his own creative powers, and 2) the *objects* of his own work become alien beings, and eventually rule over him, become powers independent of the producer. "The laborer exists for the process of production, and not the process of production for the laborer."[10]

A misunderstanding of Marx on this point is widespread, even among socialists. It is believed that Marx spoke primarily of the *economic* exploitation of the worker, and the fact that his share of the product was not as large as it should be, or that the product should belong to him, instead of to the capitalist. But as I have shown before, the state as a capitalist, as in the Soviet Union, would not have been any more welcome to Marx than the private capitalist. He is not concerned primarily with the equalization of income. He is concerned with

[7] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 98.
[8] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 99.
[9] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 99.
[10] *Capital I*, l.c. p. 536.

the liberation of man from a kind of work which destroys his individuality, which transforms him into a thing, and which makes him into the slave of things. Just as Kierkegaard was concerned with the salvation of the individual, so Marx was, and his criticism of capitalist society is directed not at its method of distribution of income, but its mode of production, its destruction of individuality and its enslavement of man, not by the capitalist, but the enslavement of man—worker *and* capitalist—by things and circumstances of their own making.

Marx goes still further. In unalienated work man not only realizes himself as an individual, but also as a species-being. For Marx, as for Hegel and many other thinkers of the enlightenment, each individual represented the species, that is to say, humanity as a whole, the universality of man: the development of man leads to the unfolding of his whole humanity. In the process of work he "no longer reproduces himself merely intellectually, as in consciousness, but actively and in a real sense, and he sees his own reflection in a world which he has constructed. While, therefore, alienated labor takes away the object of production from man, it also takes away his *species life*, his real objectivity as a species-being, and changes his advantage over animals into a disadvantage in so far as his inorganic body, nature, is taken from him. Just as alienated labor transforms free and self-directed activity into a means, so it transforms the species life of man into a means of physical existence. Consciousness, which man has from his species, is transformed through alienation so that species life becomes only a means for him."[11]

As I indicated before, Marx assumed that the alienation of work, while existing throughout history, reaches

[11] *E.P. MSS.*, pp. 102-3.

As in religion man is governed by the products of his own brain, so in capitalist production he is governed by the products of his own hands."[14] "Machinery is adapted to the weakness of the human being, in order to turn the weak human being into a machine."[15]

The alienation of work in man's production is much greater than it was when production was by handicraft and manufacture. "In handicrafts and manufacture, the workman makes use of a tool; in the factory the machine makes use of him. There the movements of the instrument of labor proceed from him; here it is the movement of the machines that he must follow. In manufacture, the workmen are parts of a living mechanism; in the factory we have a lifeless mechanism, independent of the workman, who becomes its mere living appendage."[16] It is of the utmost importance for the understanding of Marx to see how the concept of alienation was and remained the focal point in the thinking of the young Marx who wrote the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, and of the "old" Marx who wrote *Capital*. Aside from the examples already given, the following passages, one from the *Manuscripts*, the other from *Capital*, ought to make this continuity quite clear:

"This fact simply implies that the object produced by labor, its product, now stands opposed to it as an *alien being*, as a *power independent* of the producer. The product of labor is labor which has been embodied in an object and turned into a physical thing; this product is an *objectification* of labor. The performance of work is at the same time its objectification. The performance of work appears in the sphere of political economy as a

[14] *Capital I*, l.c. p. 680-1.
[15] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 143.
[16] *Capital I*, l.c. p. 461-2.

vitiation of the worker, objectification as a *loss* and as *servitude to the object*, and appropriation as *alienation*."[17]

This is what Marx wrote in *Capital*: "Within the capitalist system all methods for raising the social productiveness of labor are brought about at the cost of the individual laborer; all means for the development of production transform themselves into means of domination over, and exploitation of, the producers; they mutilate the laborer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into a hated toil; they estrange from him the intellectual potentialities of the labor process in the same proportion as science is incorporated in it as an independent power."[18]

Again the role of private property (of course not as property of objects of use, but as capital which hires labor) was already clearly seen in its alienating functioning by the young Marx: "*Private property*," he wrote, "is therefore the product, the necessary result, of *alienated labor*, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself. *Private property* is thus derived from the analysis of the concept of *alienated labor*; that is, alienated man, alienated labor, alienated life, and estranged man."[19]

It is not only that the world of things becomes the ruler of man, but also that the *social and political circumstances* which he creates become his masters. "This consolidation of what we ourselves produce, which turns into an objective power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing to naught

[17] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 95.
[18] *Capital I*, l.c. p. 708.
[19] *E.P. MSS.*, pp. 105-6.

means to an end. But he amplifies this principle by stating that man's human essence must never become a means for individual existence. The contrast between Marx's view and Communist totalitarianism could hardly be expressed more radically; humanity in man, says Marx, must not even become a *means* to his individual existence; how much less could it be considered a means for the state, the class, or the nation.

Alienation leads to the perversion of all values. By making economy and its values—"gain, work, thrift, and sobriety"[23]—the supreme aim of life, man fails to develop the truly moral values, "the riches of a good conscience, of virtue, etc., but how can I be virtuous if I am not alive, and how can I have a good conscience if I am not aware of anything?"[24] In a state of alienation each sphere of life, the economic and the moral, is independent from the other, "each is concentrated on a specific area of alienated activity and is itself alienated from the other."[25]

Marx recognized what becomes of human needs in an alienated world, and he actually foresaw with amazing clarity the completion of this process as it is visible only today. While in a socialist perspective the main importance should be attributed "to the *wealth* of human needs, and consequently also to a *new mode of production* and to a new *object* of production," to "a new manifestation of *human* powers and a new enrichment of the human being,"[26] in the alienated world of capitalism needs are not expressions of man's latent powers, that is, they are not *human* needs; in capitalism "every man speculates upon creating a *new* need in another in order

[23] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 146.
[24] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 146.
[25] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 146
[26] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 140.

to force him to a new sacrifice, to place him in a new dependence, and to entice him into a new kind of pleasure and thereby into economic ruin. Everyone tries to establish over others an *alien* power in order to find there the satisfaction of his own egoistic need. With the mass of objects, therefore, there also increases the realm of alien entities to which man is subjected. Every new product is a new *potentiality* of mutual deceit and robbery. Man becomes increasingly poor as a man; he has increasing need of *money* in order to take possession of the hostile being. The power of his *money* diminishes directly with the growth of the quantity of production, i.e., his need increases with the increasing *power* of money. The need for money is therefore the real need created by the modern economy, and the only need which it creates. The *quantity* of money becomes increasingly its only important quality. Just as it reduces every entity to its abstraction, so it reduces itself in its own development to a *quantitative* entity. Excess and immoderation become its true standard. This is shown subjectively, partly in the fact that the expansion of production and of needs becomes an *ingenious* and always *calculating* subservience to inhuman, depraved, unnatural, and *imaginary* appetites. Private property does not know how to change crude need into *human* need; its *idealism* is *fantasy*, *caprice* and *fancy*. No eunuch flatters his tyrant more shamefully or seeks by more infamous means to stimulate his jaded appetite, in order to gain some favor, than does the eunuch of industry, the entrepreneur, in order to acquire a few silver coins or to charm the gold from the purse of his dearly beloved neighbor. (Every product is a bait by means of which the individual tries to entice the essence of the other person, his money. Every real or potential need is a weakness which

will draw the bird into the lime. Universal exploitation of human communal life. As every imperfection of man is a bond with heaven, a point at which his heart is accessible to the priest, so every want is an opportunity for approaching one's neighbor with an air of friendship, and saying, 'Dear friend, I will give you what you need, but you know the *conditio sine qua non.* You know what ink you must use in signing yourself over to me. I shall swindle you while providing your enjoyment.') The entrepreneur accedes to the most depraved fancies of his neighbor, plays the role of pander between him and his needs, awakens unhealthy appetites in him, and watches for every weakness in order, later, to claim the remuneration for this labor of love."[27] The man who has thus become subject to his alienated needs is "a *mentally* and *physically dehumanized* being . . . the *self-conscious* and *self-acting commodity.*"[28] This commodity-man knows only one way of relating himself to the world outside, by having it and by consuming (using) it. The more alienated he is, the more the sense of having and using constitutes his relationship to the world. "The less you *are*, the less you express your life, the more you *have*, the greater is your *alienated* life and the greater is the saving of your alienated being."[29]

There is only one correction which history has made in Marx's concept of alienation; Marx believed that the working class was the most alienated class, hence that the emancipation from alienation would necessarily start with the liberation of the working class. Marx did not foresee the extent to which alienation was to become the fate of the vast majority of people, especially of the ever-

[27] *E.P. MSS.*, pp. 140-2.
[28] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 111.
[29] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 144.

increasing segment of the population which manipulate symbols and men, rather than machines. If anything, the clerk, the salesman, the executive, are even more alienated today than the skilled manual worker. The latter's functioning still depends on the expression of certain personal qualities like skill, reliability, etc., and he is not forced to sell his "personality," his smile, his opinions in the bargain; the symbol manipulators are hired not only for their skill, but for all those personality qualities which make them "attractive personality packages," easy to handle and to manipulate. They are the true "organization men"—more so than the skilled laborer—their idol being the corporation. But as far as consumption is concerned, there is no difference between manual workers and the members of the bureaucracy. They all crave for things, new things, to have and to use. They are the passive recipients, the consumers, chained and weakened by the very things which satisfy their synthetic needs. They are not related to the world productively, grasping it in its full reality and in this process becoming one with it; they worship things, the machines which produce the things—and in this alienated world they feel as strangers and quite alone. In spite of Marx's underestimating the role of the bureaucracy, his general description could nevertheless have been written today: "Production does not simply produce man as a *commodity*, the *commodity-man*, man in the role of *commodity*; it produces him in keeping with this role as a *spiritually* and physically *dehumanized* being—[the] immorality, deformity, and hebetation of the workers and the capitalists. Its product is the *self-conscious* and *self-acting commodity* . . . the human commodity."[30]

[30] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 111.

To what extent things and circumstances of our own making have become our masters, Marx could hardly have foreseen; yet nothing could prove his prophecy more drastically than the fact that the whole human race is today the prisoner of the nuclear weapons it has created, and of the political institutions which are equally of its own making. A frightened mankind waits anxiously to see whether it will be saved from the power of the things it has created, from the blind action of the bureaucracies it has appointed.

6

MARX'S CONCEPT OF SOCIALISM

Marx's concept of socialism follows from his concept of man. It should be clear by now that according to this concept, socialism is *not* a society of regimented, automatized individuals, regardless of whether there is equality of income or not, and regardless of whether they are well fed and well clad. It is not a society in which the individual is subordinated to the state, to the machine, to the bureaucracy. Even if the state as an "abstract capitalist" were the employer, even if "the entire social capital were united in the hands either of a single capitalist or a single capitalist corporation,"[1] this would not be socialism. In fact, as Marx says quite clearly in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, "communism as such is not the aim of human development." What, then, is the aim?

Quite clearly the aim of socialism is *man*. It is to

[1] *Capital I*, l.c. p. 689.

create a form of production and an organization of society in which man can overcome alienation from his product, from his work, from his fellow man, from himself and from nature; in which he can return to himself and grasp the world with his own powers, thus becoming one with the world. Socialism for Marx was, as Paul Tillich put it, "a resistance movement against the destruction of love in social reality."[2]

Marx expressed the aim of socialism with great clarity at the end of the third volume of *Capital*: "In fact, the realm of freedom does not commence until the point is passed where labor under the compulsion of necessity and of external utility is required. In the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of material production in the strict meaning of the term. Just as the savage must wrestle with nature, in order to satisfy his wants, in order to maintain his life and reproduce it, so civilized man has to do it, and he must do it in all forms of society and under all possible modes of production. With his development the realm of natural necessity expands, because his wants increase; but at the same time the forces of production increase, by which these wants are satisfied. The freedom in this field cannot consist of anything else but of the fact that *socialized man, the associated producers, regulate their interchange with nature rationally, bring it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by some blind power;* they accomplish their task with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most adequate to their human nature and most worthy of it. *But it always remains a realm of necessity.* Beyond it begins that development of human power, which is its own end, the true realm of freedom,

[2] *Protestantische Vision*, Ring Verlag, Stuttgart, 1952, p. 6. [My translation—E.F.]

which, however, can flourish only upon that realm of necessity as its basis."[3]

Marx expresses here all essential elements of socialism. First, man produces in an associated, not competitive way; he produces rationally and in an unalienated way, which means that he brings production under his control, instead of being ruled by it as by some blind power. This clearly excludes a concept of socialism in which man is manipulated by a bureaucracy, even if this bureaucracy rules the whole state economy, rather than only a big corporation. It means that the individual participates actively in the planning *and* in the execution of the plans; it means, in short, the realization of political and industrial democracy. Marx expected that by this new form of an unalienated society man would become independent, stand on his own feet, and would no longer be crippled by the alienated mode of production and consumption; that he would truly be the master and the creator of his life, and hence that he could begin to make *living* his main business, rather than producing the *means* for living. Socialism, for Marx, was never as such the fulfillment of life, but the *condition* for such fulfillment. When man has built a rational, nonalienated form of society, he will have the chance to begin with what is the aim of life: the "development of human power, which is its own end, the true realm of freedom." Marx, the man who every year read all the works of Aeschylus and Shakespeare, who brought to life in himself the greatest works of human thought, would never have dreamt that his idea of socialism could be interpreted as having as its aim the well-fed and well-clad "welfare" or "workers' " state. Man,

[3] *Capital* III, translated by Ernest Untermann, Charles H. Kerr & Co., Chicago 1909, p. 954.

in Marx's view, has created in the course of history a culture which he will be free to make his own when he is freed from the chains, not only of economic poverty, but of the spiritual poverty created by alienation. Marx's vision is based on his faith in man, in the inherent and real potentialities of the essence of man which have developed in history. He looked at socialism as the *condition* of human freedom and creativity, not as in itself constituting the goal of man's life.

For Marx, socialism (or communism) is not flight or abstraction from, or loss of the objective world which men have created by the objectification of their faculties. It is not an impoverished return to unnatural, primitive simplicity. It is rather the first real emergence, the genuine actualization of man's nature as something real. Socialism, for Marx, is a society which permits the actualization of man's essence, by overcoming his alienation. It is nothing less than creating the conditions for the truly free, rational, active and independent man; it is the fulfillment of the prophetic aim: the destruction of the idols.

That Marx could be regarded as an enemy of freedom was made possible only by the fantastic fraud of Stalin in presuming to talk in the name of Marx, combined with the fantastic ignorance about Marx that exists in the Western world. For Marx, the aim of socialism was freedom, but freedom in a much more radical sense than the existing democracy conceives of it—freedom in the sense of independence, which is based on man's standing on his own feet, using his own powers and relating himself to the world productively. "Freedom," said Marx, "is so much the essence of man that even its opponents realize it. . . . No man fights freedom; he fights at most the freedom of others. Every kind of freedom has therefore always existed, only at one time as

a special privilege, another time as a universal right."[4]

Socialism, for Marx, is a society which serves the needs of man. But, many will ask, is not that exactly what modern capitalism does? Are not our big corporations most eager to serve the needs of man? And are the big advertising companies not reconnaissance parties which, by means of great efforts, from surveys to "motivation analysis," try to find out what the needs of man are? Indeed, one can understand the concept of socialism only if one understands Marx's distinction between the *true* needs of man, and the synthetic, *artificially produced* needs of man.

As follows from the whole concept of man, his *real needs* are rooted in his nature; this distinction between real and false needs is possible only on the basis of a picture of the nature of man and the true human needs rooted in his nature. Man's true needs are those whose fulfillment is necessary for the realization of his essence as a human being. As Marx put it: "The existence of what I truly love is felt by me as a necessity, as a need, without which my essence cannot be fulfilled, satisfied, complete."[5] Only on the basis of a specific concept of man's nature can Marx make the difference between true and false needs of man. Purely subjectively, the false needs are experienced as being as urgent and real as the true needs, and from a purely subjective viewpoint, there could not be a criterion for the distinction. (In modern terminology one might differentiate between neurotic and rational [healthy] needs).[6] Often man is conscious

[4] Quoted by R. Dunayevskaya, *Marxism and Freedom*, with a preface by H. Marcuse, Bookman Associates, New York, 1958, p. 19.

[5] *MEGA I*, 1 a, p. 184.

[6] Cf. my *Man for Himself*, Rinehart & Co., Inc., New York, 1947.

only of his false needs and unconscious of his real ones. The task of the analyst of society is precisely to awaken man so that he can become aware of the illusory false needs and of the reality of his true needs. The principal goal of socialism, for Marx, is the recognition and realization of man's true needs, which will be possible only when production serves man, and capital ceases to create and exploit the false needs of man.

Marx's concept of socialism is a protest, as is all existentialist philosophy, against the alienation of man; if, as Aldous Huxley put it, "our present economic, social and international arrangements are based, in large measure, upon organized lovelessness,"[7] then Marx's socialism is a protest against this very lovelessness, against man's exploitation of man, and against his exploitativeness towards nature, the wasting of our natural resources at the expense of the majority of men today, and more so of the generations to come. The unalienated man, who is the goal of socialism as we have shown before, is the man who does not "dominate" nature, but who becomes one with it, who is alive and responsive toward objects, so that objects come to life for him.

Does not all this mean that Marx's socialism is the realization of the deepest religious impulses common to the great humanistic religions of the past? Indeed it does, provided we understand that Marx, like Hegel and like many others, expresses his concern for man's soul, not in theistic, but in philosophical language.

Marx fought against religion exactly because it is alienated, and does not satisfy the true needs of man. Marx's fight against God is, in reality, a fight against the idol that is called God. Already as a young man he

[7] A. Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1944, p. 93.

wrote as the motto for his dissertation "Not those are godless who have contempt for the gods of the masses but those who attribute the opinions of the masses to the gods." Marx's atheism is the most advanced form of rational mysticism, closer to Meister Eckhart or to Zen Buddhism than are most of those fighters for God and religion who accuse him of "godlessness."

It is hardly possible to talk about Marx's attitude toward religion without mentioning the connection between his philosophy of history, and of socialism, with the Messianic hope of the Old Testament prophets and the spiritual roots of humanism in Greek and Roman thinking. The Messianic hope is, indeed, a feature unique in Occidental thought. The prophets of the Old Testament are not only, like Lao Tzu or Buddha, *spiritual* leaders; they are also *political* leaders. They show man a vision of how he ought to be, and confront him with the alternatives between which he must choose. Most of the Old Testament prophets share the idea that history has a meaning, that man perfects himself in the process of history, and that he will eventually create a social order of peace and justice. But peace and justice for the prophets do not mean the absence of war and the absence of injustice. Peace and justice are concepts which are rooted in the whole of the Old Testament concept of man. Man, before he has consciousness of himself, that is, before he is human, lives in unity with nature (Adam and Eve in Paradise). The first act of Freedom, which is the capacity to say "no," opens his eyes, and he sees himself as a stranger in the world, beset by conflicts with nature, between man and man, between man and woman. The process of history is the process by which man develops his specifically human qualities, his powers of love and understanding; and once he has achieved full humanity he can return to the

lost unity between himself and the world. This new unity, however, is different from the preconscious one which existed before history began. It is the at-onement of man with himself, with nature, and with his fellow man, based on the fact that man has given birth to himself in the historical process. In Old Testament thought, God is revealed in history ("the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob"), and in *history*, not in a state *transcending* history, lies the salvation of man. This means that man's spiritual aims are inseparably connected with the transformation of society; politics is basically not a realm that can be divorced from that of moral values and of man's self-realization.

Related thoughts arose in Greek (and Hellenistic) and Roman thinking. From Zeno, the founder of Stoic philosophy, to Seneca and Cicero, the concepts of natural law and of the equality of man exercised a powerful influence on the minds of men and, together with the prophetic tradition, are the foundations of Christian thinking.

While Christianity, especially since Paul, tended to transform the historical concept of salvation into an "other-worldly," purely spiritual one, and while the Church became the substitute for the "good society," this transformation was by no means a complete one. The early Church fathers express a radical criticism of the existing state; Christian thought of the late Middle Ages criticizes secular authority and the state from the standpoint of divine *and* natural law. This viewpoint stresses that society and the state must not be divorced from the spiritual values rooted in revelation and reason ("intellect" in the scholastic meaning of the word). Beyond this, the Messianic idea was expressed even in more radical forms in the Christian sects before the Reformation, and in the thinking of many Christian

groups after the Reformation, down to the Society of Friends of the present time.

The mainstream of Messianic thinking after the Reformation, however, was expressed no longer in religious thought, but in philosophical, historical and social thought. It was expressed somewhat obliquely in the great utopias of the Renaissance, in which the new world is not in a distant future, but in a distant place. It was expressed in the thinking of the philosophers of the enlightenment and of the French and English Revolutions. It found its latest and most complete expression in Marx's concept of socialism. Whatever direct influence Old Testament thinking might have had on him through socialists like Moses Hess, no doubt the prophetic Messianic tradition influenced him indirectly through the thought of the enlightenment philosophers and especially through the thought stemming from Spinoza, Goethe, Hegel. What is common to prophetic, thirteenth-century Christian thought, eighteenth-century enlightenment,[8] and nineteenth-century socialism, is the idea that State (society) and spiritual values cannot be divorced from each other; that politics and moral values are indivisible. This idea was attacked by the secular concepts of the Renaissance (Machiavelli) and again by the secularism of the modern state. It seems that Western man, whenever he was under the influence of gigantic material conquests, gave himself unrestrictedly to the

[8] Cf. Carl L. Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1932 and 1959; A.P. d'Entrèves, *The Medieval Contribution to Political Thought*, Oxford University Press, 1939; Hans Baron, *Fifteenth-Century Civilization and the Renaissance*, in Cambridge Modern History, Vol. 8; Harold J. Laski, *Political Theory in the Later Middle Ages*, The New Cambridge Modern History, Vol. I.

new powers he had acquired and, drunk with these new powers, forgot *himself*. The elite of these societies became obsessed with the wish for power, luxury, and the manipulation of men, and the masses followed them. This happened in the Renaissance with its new science, the discovery of the globe, the prosperous City States of Northern Italy; it happened again in the explosive development of the first and the present second industrial revolutions.

But this development has been complicated by the presence of another factor. If the state or the society is meant to serve the realization of certain spiritual values, the danger exists that a supreme authority tells man—and forces him—to think and behave in a certain way. The incorporation of certain objectively valid values into social life tends to produce authoritarianism. The spiritual authority of the Middle Ages was the Catholic Church. Protestantism fought this authority, at first promising greater independence for the individual, only to make the princely state the undisputed and arbitrary ruler of man's body and soul. The rebellion against princely authority occurred in the name of the nation, and for a while the national state promised to be the representative of freedom. But soon the national state devoted itself to the protection of the material interests of those who owned capital, and could thus exploit the labor of the majority of the population. Certain classes of society protested against this new authoritarianism and insisted on the freedom of the individual from the interference of secular authority. This postulate of liberalism, which tended to protect "freedom from," led, on the other hand, to the insistence that state and society must not attempt to realize "freedom to," that is to say, liberalism had to insist not only on separation from State and Church, but had also to deny that it was the

function of the state to help realize certain spiritual and moral values; these values were supposed to be entirely a matter for the individual.

Socialism (in its Marxist and other forms) returned to the idea of the "good society" as the condition for the realization of man's spiritual needs. It was antiauthoritarian, both as far as the Church *and* the State are concerned, hence it aimed at the eventual disappearance of the state and at the establishment of a society composed of voluntarily cooperating individuals. Its aim was a reconstruction of society in such a way as to make it the basis for man's true return to himself, *without* the presence of those authoritarian forces which restricted and impoverished man's mind.

Thus, Marxist and other forms of socialism are the heirs of prophetic Messianism, Christian Chiliastic sectarianism, thirteenth-century Thomism, Renaissance Utopianism, and eighteenth-century enlightenment.[9] It is the synthesis of the prophetic-Christian idea of society as the plane of spiritual realization, and of the idea of individual freedom. For this reason, it is opposed to the Church because of its restriction of the mind, and to liberalism because of its separation of society and moral values. It is opposed to Stalinism and Krushchevism, for their authoritarianism as much as their neglect of humanist values.

Socialism is the abolition of human self-alienation, the return of man as a real human being. "It is the *definitive* resolution of the antagonism between man and nature, and between man and man. It is the true solution of the conflict between existence and essence, be-

[9] I shall deal with this development in detail in a forthcoming book in the World Perspective Religious Series, ed. by Ruth Nanda Anshen, Harper & Brothers, New York.

tween objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. It is a solution of the riddle of history and knows itself to be this solution".[10,11] For Marx, socialism meant the social order which permits the return of man to himself, the identity between existence and essence, the overcoming of the separateness and antagonism between subject and object, the humanization of nature; it meant a world in which man is no longer a stranger among strangers, but is in *his* world, where he is at home.

7

THE CONTINUITY IN MARX'S THOUGHT

Our presentation of Marx's concept of human nature, alienation, activity, etc., would be quite one-sided and, in fact, misleading if they were right who claim that the ideas of the "young Marx" contained in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* were abandoned by the older and mature Marx as remnants of an idealistic past connected with Hegel's teaching. If those who make this claim were right, one might still prefer the young to the old Marx, and wish to connect socialism with the former

[10] *E.P. MSS.*, p. 127.

[11] The idea of the relation between Messianic prophetism and Marx's socialism has been stressed by a number of authors. The following may be mentioned here: Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History*, Chicago University Press, 1949; Paul Tillich in writings quoted here. Lukacz, in *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* speaks of Marx as of an eschatological thinker. Cf. also statements by Alfred Weber, J.A. Schumpeter, and a number of other authors, quoted in *Marxismusstudien.*

rather than with the latter. However, there is fortunately no such need to split Marx into two. The fact is that the basic ideas on man, as Marx expressed them in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts,* and the ideas of the older Marx as expressed in *Capital,* did not undergo a basic change; that Marx did not renounce his earlier views, as the spokesmen of the above-mentioned thesis claim.

First of all, who are those who claim that the "young Marx" and the "old Marx" have contradictory views on man? This view is presented mainly by the Russian Communists; they can hardly do anything else, since their thinking, as well as their social and political system, is in every way a contradiction of Marx's humanism. In their system, man is the servant of the state and of production, rather than being the supreme aim of all social arrangements. Marx's aim, the development of the individuality of the human personality, is negated in the Soviet system to an even greater extent than in contemporary capitalism. The materialism of the Communists is much closer to the mechanistic materialism of the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie that Marx fought against, than to Marx's historical materialism.

The Communist party of the Soviet Union expressed this view by forcing G. Lukacs, who was the first one to revive Marx's humanism, to a "confession" of his errors when Lukacs was in Russia in 1934, after being forced to escape from the Nazis. Similarly, Ernst Bloch, who presents the same emphasis on Marx's humanism in his brilliant book *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (The Principle Hope),[1] suffered severe attacks from Communist party writers, despite the fact that his book contains a number

[1] Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung,* Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1959, 2 volumes.

of admiring remarks about Soviet Communism. Aside from the Communist writers, Daniel Bell has recently taken the same position by claiming that the view of Marx's humanism based on the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* "is not the historical Marx." "While one may be sympathetic to such an approach," says Bell, "it is only further myth-making to read this concept back as a central theme of Marx."[2]

It is indeed true that the classic interpreters of Marx, whether they were reformists like Bernstein, or orthodox Markists like Kautsky, Plechanow, Lenin or Bucharin, did not interpret Marx as being centered around his humanist existentialism. Two facts mainly explain this phenomenon. First, the fact that the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* were not published before 1932, and were unknown until then even in manuscript form; and the fact that *German Ideology* was never published in full until 1932, and for the first time in part only in 1926.[3] Naturally, these facts contributed a great deal to the distorted and one-sided interpretation of Marx's ideas by the above-mentioned writers. But the fact that these writings of Marx were more or less unknown until the early twenties and the thirties, respectively, is by no means a sufficient explanation for the neglect of Marxist humanism in the "classic" interpretation, since *Capital* and other published writings of Marx, such as the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law* (published in 1844) could have given a sufficient basis to visualize Marx's humanism. The more relevant explanation lies in the fact that the philosophical thinking of the time from the death of Marx to the 1920's was dominated by positi-

[2] This and all following quotations from D. Bell are from his paper "The Meaning of Alienation" in *Thought*, 1959.

[3] In *Marx-Engels Archiv I*, ed. by Rjazanow.

vistic-mechanistic ideas which influenced thinkers like Lenin and Bucharin. It must also not be forgotten that, like Marx himself, the classic Marxists were allergic to terms which smacked of idealism and religion, since they were well aware that these terms were to a large extent, used to hide basic economic and social realities.

For Marx this allergy to idealistic *terminology* was all the more understandable, since he was deeply rooted in the spiritual, though nontheistic tradition, which stretches not only from Spinoza and Goethe to Hegel, but which also goes back to Prophetic Messianism. These latter ideas were quite consciously alive in socialists like St. Simon and Moses Hess, and certainly formed a great part of the socialist thinking of the nineteenth-century and even of the thinking of leading socialists up to the First World War (such as Jean Jaurès).

The spiritual-humanistic tradition, in which Marx still lived and which was almost drowned by the mechanistic-materialistic spirit of successful industrialism, experienced a revival, although only on a small scale in individual thinkers, at the end of the First World War, and on a larger scale during and after the Second World War. The dehumanization of man as evidenced in the cruelties of the Stalinist and Hitler regimes, in the brutality of indiscriminate killing during the war, and also the increasing dehumanization brought about by the new gadget-minded consumer and organization man, lead to this new expression of humanistic ideas. In other words, the protest against alienation expressed by Marx, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, then muted by the apparent success of capitalist industrialism, raised its voice again after the human failure of the dominant system, and led to a re-interpretation of Marx, based on the *whole* Marx and his humanist philosophy. I have mentioned already the Communist writers who are outstanding in

this humanist revisionism. I should add here the Yugoslav Communists who, although they have not as far as I know raised the philosophical point of alienation, have emphasized as their main objection to Russian Communism their concern for the individual as against the machinery of the state, and have developed a system of decentralization and individual initiative which is in radical contrast to the Russian ideal of centralization and of complete bureaucratization.

In Poland, East Germany and Hungary, the political opposition to the Russians was closely allied to the representatives of humanist socialism. In France, Germany and to a smaller extent in England, there is lively discussion going on regarding Marx which is based on a thorough knowledge and understanding of his ideas. Of literature in German, I mention only the papers contained in the *Marxismusstudien*,[4] written largely by Protestant theologians; French literature is even larger, and written by Catholics[5] as well as by Marxists and non-Marxist philosophers.[6]

The revival of Marxist humanism in English-speaking countries has suffered from the fact that the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* had never been translated into English until recently. Nevertheless, men like T. B. Bottomore and others share the ideas on Marxist humanism represented by the aforementioned writers.

[4] J.C.B. Mohr, Tübingen, Vol. I and II, 1954, 1957.

[5] The main work on this theme is by a Jesuit priest, Jean-Yves Calvez, *La Pensée de Karl Marx*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1956.

[6] I will mention only the works of H. Lefèbvre, Navill, Goldmann, and of A. Kojève, J.-P. Sartre, M. Merlean-Ponty. Cf. the excellent paper "Der Marxismus im Spiegel der Französischen Philosophie" by I. Fetzcher, in *Marxismusstudien*, l.c. Vol. I, p. 173 ff.

In the United States, the most important work which has opened up an understanding of Marx's humanism is Herbert Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution*;[7] Raya Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom*, with a preface by H. Marcuse,[8] is also a significant addition to Marxist-humanist thought.

Pointing to the fact that the Russian Communists were forced to postulate the split between the young and the old Marx, and adding the names of a number of profound and serious writers who negate this Russian position does not, however, constitute a proof that the Russians (and D. Bell) are wrong. While it would transcend the limits of this volume to attempt as full a refutation of the Russian position as is desirable, I shall try, nevertheless, to demonstrate to the reader why the Russian position is untenable.

There are some facts which, superficially appraised, might seem to support the Communist position. In *German Ideology*, Marx and Engels no longer used the terms "species" and "human essence" ("Gattung" and "menschliches Wesen"), which are used in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*. Furthermore, Marx said later (in the preface to *The Critique of Political Economy*, 1859) that in *German Ideology* he and Engels "resolved to work out in common the opposition of our view to the ideological view of German philosophy, in fact, to settle accounts with our erstwhile philosophical conscience."[9] It has been claimed that this "settling of

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[7] Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1941.

[8] Bookman Associates, New York, 1958.

[9] When outside circumstances made the publication of this work (*German Ideology*) impossible, "we abandoned the manuscript to the gnawing criticism of the mice all the more willingly as we had achieved our main purpose—self-clarification."

accounts" with their erstwhile philosophical conscience meant that Marx and Engels had abandoned the basic ideas expressed in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts.* But even a superficial study of *German Ideology* reveals that this is not true. While *German Ideology* does not use certain terms such as "human essence," etc., it nevertheless continues the main trend of thought of the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts,* especially the *concept of alienation.*

Alienation, in *German Ideology,* is explained as the result of the division of labor which "implies the contradiction between the interest of the separate individual or the individual family and the communal interest of all individuals who have intercourse with one another."[10] In the same paragraph the concept of alienation is defined, as in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts,* in these words: "man's own deed becomes an alien power opposed to him, which enslaves him instead of being controlled by him."[11] Here, too, we find the definition of alienation with reference to circumstances already quoted above: "This crystallization of social activity, this consolidation of what we ourselves produce into an objective power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing to naught our calculations, is one of the chief factors in historical development up till now."[12, 13]

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[10] *German Ideology,* l.c. p. 22.

[11] *German Ideology,* l.c. p. 22.

[12] *German Ideology,* l.c. p. 22-3.

[13] It is significant that Marx corrected Engel's expression "self-activity" into "activity" when Engels used it with reference to *previous* history. It shows how important it was for Marx to keep the term "self-activity" for a non-alienated society. See *MEGA I,* Vol. V, p. 61.

8

MARX, THE MAN

The misunderstanding and the misinterpretation of Marx's writings are paralleled only by the misinterpretation of his personality. Just as in the case of his theories, the distortion of his personality also follows a cliché repeated by journalists, politicians, and even social scientists who should know better. He is described as a "lonely" man, isolated from his fellows, aggressive, arrogant, and authoritarian. Anyone who has even a slight knowledge of Marx's life would have great difficulty in accepting this because he would find it difficult to reconcile it with the picture of Marx the husband, the father, and the friend.

There are perhaps few marriages known to the world which were a human fulfillment in such an extraordinary way as was that of Karl and Jenny Marx. He, the son of a Jewish lawyer, fell in love as an adolescent with Jenny von Westphalen, the daughter of a Prussian feudal family, and a descendant of one of the oldest Scottish families. They married when he was twenty-four years of age, and he survived her death by only a little over a year. This was a marriage in which, despite the differences in background, despite a continual life of material poverty and sickness, there was unwavering love and mutual happiness, possible only in the case of two people with an extraordinary capacity for love, and deeply in love with each other.

His youngest daughter, Eleanor, described the relationship between her parents in a letter referring to

a day shortly before her mother's death, and over a year before the death of her father. "Moor" [Marx's nickname], she writes, "got the better of his illness again. Never shall I forget the morning he felt himself strong enough to go into mother's room. When they were together they were young again—she a young girl and he a loving youth, both on life's threshold, not an old, disease-ridden man and an old, dying woman parting from each other for life."[1]

Marx's relationship to his children was as free from any taint of domination, and as full of productive love, as that to his wife. One needs only to read the description given by his daughter Eleanor of his walks with his children, when he told them tales, tales measured by miles, not chapters. "Tell us another mile," was the cry of the girls. "He read the whole of Homer, the whole *Nibelungenlied, Gudrun, Don Quixote,* the *Arabian Nights,* etc. As to Shakespeare, he was the Bible of our house, and seldom out of our hands or mouths. By the time I was six, I knew scene upon scene of Shakespeare by heart."[2]

His friendship with Frederick Engels is perhaps even more unique than his marriage and his relationship to his children. Engels himself was a man of extraordinary human and intellectual qualities. He always recognized and admired Marx's superior talent. He devoted his life to Marx's work, and yet he was never reluctant to make his own contribution, and did not underestimate it. There was hardly ever any friction in the relationship between these two men, no competitiveness, but a sense

[1] *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels,* Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, p. 127.

[2] *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels,* l.c. p. 252.

of comradeship rooted in as deep a love for each other as one ever might find between two men.

Marx was the productive, nonalienated, independent man whom his writings visualized as the man of a new society. Productively related to the whole world, to people, and to ideas, he *was* what he *thought*. A man who read Aeschylus and Shakespeare every year in the original languages, and who during his saddest time, that of the illness of his wife, plunged into mathematics and studied calculus, Marx was a humanist through and through. Nothing was more wonderful to him than man, and he expressed that feeling in a frequently repeated quotation from Hegel: "even the criminal thought of a malefactor has more grandeur and nobility than the wonders of heaven." His answers to the questionnaire made up for him by his daughter Laura reveal a great deal of the man: his idea of misery was submission; the vice he detested most was servility, and his favorite maxims were "nothing human is alien to me" and "one must doubt of everything."

Why was this man supposed to be arrogant, lonely, authoritarian? Aside from the motive of slander, there were some reasons for this misunderstanding. First of all, Marx (like Engels) had a sarcastic style, especially in writing, and was a fighter with a good deal of aggressiveness. But, more importantly, he was a man with a complete inability to tolerate sham and deception, and with an utter seriousness about the problems of human existence. He was incapable of accepting dishonest rationalizations, or fictitious statements about important matters, politely and with a smile. He was incapable of any kind of insincerity, whether it referred to personal relations or to ideas. Since most people prefer to think in fictions rather than in realities, and to deceive themselves and others about the facts underlying individual

and social life, they must indeed regard Marx as one who was arrogant or cold, but this judgment says more about them than it does about Marx.

If and when the world returns to the tradition of humanism and overcomes the deterioration of Western culture, both in its Soviet and in its capitalist form, it will see, indeed, that Marx was neither a fanatic nor an opportunist—that he represented the flowering of Western humanity, that he was a man with an uncompromising sense of truth, penetrating to the very essence of reality, and never taken in by the deceptive surface; that he was of an unquenchable courage and integrity; of a deep concern for man and his future; unselfish, and with little vanity or lust for power; always alive, always stimulating, and bringing to life whatever he touched. He represented the Western tradition in its best features: its faith in reason and in the progress of man. He represented, in fact, the very concept of man which was at the center of his thinking. The man who *is* much, and *has* little; the man who is rich because he has need of his fellow man.

PREFACE TO ECONOMIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL MANUSCRIPTS

I have already announced in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*[1] a critique of jurisprudence and political science in the form of a critique of the *Hegelian* philosophy of right. However, in preparing the work for publication it became apparent that a combination of the criticism directed solely against the speculative theory with the criticism of the various subjects would be quite unsuitable; it would hamper the development of the argument and make it more difficult to follow. Moreover, I could only have compressed such a wealth of diverse subjects into a *single* work by writing in an aphoristic style, and such an aphoristic presentation would have given the *impression* of arbitrary systematization. I shall, therefore, publish my critique of law, morals, politics, etc. in a number of independent brochures; and finally I shall endeavor, in a separate work, to present the interconnected whole, to show the relationships between the parts, and to provide a critique of the speculative treatment of this material. That is why, in the present work, the relationships of political economy with the state, law, morals, civil life, etc. are touched upon only to the extent that political economy itself expressly deals with these subjects.

It is hardly necessary to assure the reader who is

[1] *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher,* edited by K. Marx and A. Ruge (Paris 1844). Only one issue was published, in February 1844. Marx refers to his essay "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie," on pages 71 et seq.—*Tr. Note*

familiar with political economy that my conclusions are the fruit of an entirely empirical analysis, based upon a careful critical study of political economy.

It goes without saying that in addition to the French and English socialists I have also used German socialist writings. But the *original* and important German works on this subject—apart from the writings of Weitling—are limited to the essays published by Hess in the *Einundzwanzig Bogen*,[2] and Engels' "Umrisse zur Kritik der Nationalökonomie" in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*. In the latter publication I myself have indicated in a very general way the basic elements of the present work.

The *positive*, humanistic and naturalistic criticism begins with Feuerbach. The less blatant Feuerbach's writings, the more certain, profound, extensive and lasting is their influence; they are the only writings since Hegel's *Phenomenology* and *Logic* which contain a real theoretical revolution.

Unlike the *critical theologians* of our time I have considered the final chapter of the present work, a critical exposition of the *Hegelian dialectic* and general philosophy, to be absolutely essential, for the task has not yet been accomplished. This *lack of thoroughness* is not accidental, for the *critical* theologian remains a *theologian*. He must either begin from certain presuppositions of philosophy accepted as authoritative or else, if in the course of criticism and as a result of other people's discoveries doubts have arisen in his mind concern-

[2] *Einundzwanzig Bogen aus der Schweiz*, edited by Georg Herwegh. First part, Zurich and Winterthur 1843. Marx refers to the articles by Hess, "Sozialismus und Kommunismus" on pages 74 et seq.; "Die Eine und ganze Freiheit" on pages 92 et seq.; and "Philosophie der Tat" on pages 309 et seq.—*Tr. Note*

ing the philosophical presuppositions, he abandons them in a cowardly and unjustified manner, *abstracts* from them, and shows both his servile dependence upon them and his resentment of this dependence in a negative, unconscious and sophistical way.

Looked at more closely, *theological criticism*, which was at the beginning of the movement a genuinely progressive factor, is seen to be, in the last analysis, no more than the culmination and consequence of the old *philosophical*, and especially *Hegelian, transcendentalism* distorted into a *theological caricature*. I shall describe elsewhere at greater length, this interesting act of historical justice, this nemesis which now destines theology, ever the infected spot of philosophy, to portray in itself the negative dissolution of philosophy, i. e. the process of its decay.

First Manuscript
ALIENATED LABOR

(XXII) We have begun from the presuppositions of political economy. We have accepted its terminology and its laws. We presupposed private property, the separation of labor, capital and land, as also of wages, profit and rent, the division of labor, competition, the concept of exchange value, etc. From political economy itself, in its own words, we have shown that the worker sinks to the level of a commodity, and to a most miserable commodity; that the misery of the worker increases with the power and volume of his production; that the necessary result of competition is the accumulation of capital in a few hands, and thus a restoration of monopoly in a more terrible form; and finally that the distinction between capitalist and landlord, and between agricultural laborer and industrial worker, must disappear and the whole of society divide into the two classes of property *owners* and propertyless *workers.*

Political economy begins with the fact of private property; it does not explain it. It conceives the *material process* of private property, as this occurs in reality, in general and abstract formulas which then serve it as laws. It does not *comprehend* these laws; that is, it does not show how they arise out of the nature of private property. Political economy provides no explanation of the basis of the distinction of labor from capital, of capital from land. When, for example, the relation of wages to profits is defined, this is explained in terms of the interests of capitalists; in other words, what should

be explained is assumed. Similarly, competition is referred to at every point and is explained in terms of external conditions. Political economy tells us nothing about the extent to which these external and apparently accidental conditions are simply the expression of a necessary development. We have seen how exchange itself seems an accidental fact. The only moving forces which political economy recognizes are *avarice* and the *war between the avaricious, competition.*

Just because political economy fails to understand the interconnections within this movement it was possible to oppose the doctrine of competition to that of monopoly, the doctrine of freedom of the crafts to that of the guilds, the doctrine of the division of landed property to that of the great estates; for competition, freedom of crafts, and the division of landed property were conceived only as accidental consequences brought about by will and force, rather than as necessary, inevitable and natural consequences of monopoly, the guild system and feudal property.

Thus we have now to grasp the real connection between this whole system of alienation—private property, acquisitiveness, the separation of labor, capital and land, exchange and competition, value and the devaluation of man, monopoly and competition—and the system of *money.*

Let us not begin our explanation, as does the economist, from a legendary primordial condition. Such a primordial condition does not explain anything; it merely removes the question into a gray and nebulous distance. It asserts as a fact or event what it should deduce, namely, the necessary relation between two things; for example, between the division of labor and exchange. In the same way theology explains the origin of evil by

the fall of man; that is, it asserts as a historical fact what it should explain.

We shall begin from a *contemporary* economic fact. The worker becomes poorer the more wealth he produces and the more his production increases in power and extent. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more goods he creates. The *devaluation* of the human world increases in direct relation with the *increase in value* of the world of things. Labor does not only create goods; it also produces itself and the worker as a *commodity,* and indeed in the same proportion as it produces goods.

This fact simply implies that the object produced by labor, its product, now stands opposed to it as an *alien being,* as a *power independent* of the producer. The product of labor is labor which has been embodied in an object and turned into a physical thing; this product is an *objectification* of labor. The performance of work is at the same time its objectification. The performance of work appears in the sphere of political economy as a *vitiation* of the worker, objectification as a *loss* and as *servitude to the object,* and appropriation as *alienation.*

So much does the performance of work appear as vitiation that the worker is vitiated to the point of starvation. So much does objectification appear as loss of the object that the worker is deprived of the most essential things not only of life but also of work. Labor itself becomes an object which he can acquire only by the greatest effort and with unpredictable interruptions. So much does the appropriation of the object appear as alienation that the more objects the worker produces the fewer he can possess and the more he falls under the domination of his product, of capital.

All these consequences follow from the fact that the worker is related to the *product of his labor* as to an

alien object. For it is clear on this presupposition that the more the worker expends himself in work the more powerful becomes the world of objects which he creates in face of himself, the poorer he becomes in his inner life, and the less he belongs to himself. It is just the same as in religion. The more of himself man attributes to God the less he has left in himself. The worker puts his life into the object, and his life then belongs no longer to himself but to the object. The greater his activity, therefore, the less he possesses. What is embodied in the product of his labor is no longer his own. The greater this product is, therefore, the more he is diminished. The *alienation* of the worker in his product means not only that his labor becomes an object, assumes an *external* existence, but that it exists independently, *outside himself,* and alien to him, and that it stands opposed to him as an autonomous power. The life which he has given to the object sets itself against him as an alien and hostile force.

(XXIII) Let us now examine more closely the phenomenon of *objectification,* the worker's production and the *alienation* and *loss* of the object it produces, which is involved in it. The worker can create nothing without *nature,* without the *sensuous external world.* The latter is the material in which his labor is realized, in which it is active, out of which and through which it produces things.

But just as nature affords the *means of existence* of labor in the sense that labor cannot *live* without objects upon which it can be exercised, so also it provides the *means of existence* in a narrower sense; namely the means of physical existence for the *worker* himself. Thus, the more the worker *appropriates* the external world of sensuous nature by his labor the more he deprives himself of *means of existence,* in two respects: first, that the

sensuous external world becomes progressively less an object belonging to his labor or a means of existence of his labor, and secondly, that it becomes progressively less a means of existence in the direct sense, a means for the physical subsistence of the worker.

In both respects, therefore, the worker becomes a slave of the object; first, in that he receives an *object of work*, i.e., receives *work*, and secondly that he receives *means of subsistence*. Thus the object enables him to exist, first as a *worker* and secondly, as a *physical subject*. The culmination of this enslavement is that he can only maintain himself as a *physical subject* so far as he is a *worker*, and that it is only as a *physical subject* that he is a worker.

(The alienation of the worker in his object is expressed as follows in the laws of political economy: the more the worker produces the less he has to consume; the more value he creates the more worthless he becomes; the more refined his product the more crude and misshapen the worker; the more civilized the product the more barbarous the worker; the more powerful the work the more feeble the worker; the more the work manifests intelligence the more the worker declines in intelligence and becomes a slave of nature.)

Political economy conceals the alienation in the nature of labor insofar as it does not examine the direct relationship between the worker (work) and production. Labor certainly produces marvels for the rich but it produces privation for the worker. It produces palaces, but hovels for the worker. It produces beauty, but deformity for the worker. It replaces labor by machinery, but it casts some of the workers back into a barbarous kind of work and turns the others into machines. It produces intelligence, but also stupidity and cretinism for the workers.

The direct relationship of labor to its products is the relationship of the worker to the objects of his production. The relationship of property owners to the objects of production and to production itself is merely a *consequence* of this first relationship and confirms it. We shall consider this second aspect later.

Thus, when we ask what is the important relationship of labor, we are concerned with the relationship of the *worker* to production.

So far we have considered the alienation of the worker only from one aspect; namely, *his relationship with the products of his labor.* However, alienation appears not only in the result, but also in the *process,* of *production,* within *productive activity* itself. How could the worker stand in an alien relationship to the product of his activity if he did not alienate himself in the act of production itself? The product is indeed only the *résumé* of activity, of production. Consequently, if the product of labor is alienation, production itself must be active alienation—the alienation of activity and the activity of alienation. The alienation of the object of labor merely summarizes the alienation in the work activity itself.

What constitutes the alienation of labor? First, that the work is *external* to the worker, that it is not part of his nature; and that, consequently, he does not fulfill himself in his work but denies himself, has a feeling of misery rather than well being, does not develop freely his mental and physical energies but is physically exhausted and mentally debased. The worker therefore feels himself at home only during his leisure time, whereas at work he feels homeless. His work is not voluntary but imposed, *forced labor.* It is not the satisfaction of a need, but only a *means* for satisfying other needs. Its alien character is clearly shown by the fact that as soon as there is no physical or other compulsion it is avoided

like the plague. External labor, labor in which man alienates himself, is a labor of self-sacrifice, of mortification. Finally, the external character of work for the worker is shown by the fact that it is not his own work but work for someone else, that in work he does not belong to himself but to another person.

Just as in religion the spontaneous activity of human fantasy, of the human brain and heart, reacts independently as an alien activity of gods or devils upon the individual, so the activity of the worker is not his own spontaneous activity. It is another's activity and a loss of his own spontaneity.

We arrive at the result that man (the worker) feels himself to be freely active only in his animal functions—eating, drinking and procreating, or at most also in his dwelling and in personal adornment—while in his human functions he is reduced to an animal. The animal becomes human and the human becomes animal.

Eating, drinking and procreating are of course also genuine human functions. But abstractly considered, apart from the environment of other human activities, and turned into final and sole ends, they are animal functions.

We have now considered the act of alienation of practical human activity, labor, from two aspects: (1) the relationship of the worker to the *product of labor* as an alien object which dominates him. This relationship is at the same time the relationship to the sensuous external world, to natural objects, as an alien and hostile world; (2) the relationship of labor to the *act of production* within *labor*. This is the relationship of the worker to his own activity as something alien and not belonging to him, activity as suffering (passivity), strength as powerlessness, creation as emasculation, the *personal* physical and mental energy of the worker, his personal life (for

what is life but activity?) as an activity which is directed against himself, independent of him and not belonging to him. This is *self-alienation* as against the above-mentioned alienation of the *thing*.

(XXIV) We have now to infer a third characteristic of *alienated labor* from the two we have considered.

Man is a species-being[1] not only in the sense that he makes the community (his own as well as those of other things) his object both practically and theoretically, but also (and this is simply another expression for the same thing) in the sense that he treats himself as the present, living species, as a *universal* and consequently free being.

Species-life, for man as for animals, has its physical basis in the fact that man (like animals) lives from inorganic nature, and since man is more universal than an animal so the range of inorganic nature from which he lives is more universal. Plants, animals, minerals, air, light, etc. constitute, from the theoretical aspect, a part of human consciousness as objects of natural science and art; they are man's spiritual inorganic nature, his intellectual means of life, which he must first prepare for enjoyment and perpetuation. So also, from the practical aspect they form a part of human life and activity. In practice man lives only from these natural products, whether in the form of food, heating, clothing, housing, etc. The universality of man appears in practice in the universality which makes the whole of nature into his inorganic body: (1) as a direct means of life; and equally (2) as the material object and instrument of his life activity. Nature is the *in-*

[1] The term "species-being" is taken from Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christentums* (The Essence of Christianity). Feuerbach used the notion in making a distinction between consciousness in man and in animals. Man is conscious not merely of himself as an individual but of the human species or "human essence."—*Tr. Note*

organic body of man; that is to say, nature excluding the human body itself. To say that man *lives* from nature means that nature is his *body* with which he must remain in a continuous interchange in order not to die. The statement that the physical and mental life of man, and nature, are interdependent means simply that nature is interdependent with itself, for man is a part of nature.

Since alienated labor: (1) alienates nature from man; and (2) alienates man from himself, from his own active function, his life activity; so it alienates him from the species. It makes *species-life* into a means of individual life. In the first place it alienates species-life and individual life, and secondly, it turns the latter, as an abstraction, into the purpose of the former, also in its abstract and alienated form.

For labor, *life activity, productive life,* now appear to man only as *means* for the satisfaction of a need, the need to maintain his physical existence. Productive life is, however, species-life. It is life creating life. In the type of life activity resides the whole character of a species, its species-character; and free, conscious activity is the species-character of human beings. Life itself appears only as a *means of life.*

The animal is one with its life activity. It does not distinguish the activity from itself. It *is its activity.* But man makes his life activity itself an object of his will and consciousness. He has a conscious life activity. It is not a determination with which he is completely identified. Conscious life activity distinguishes man from the life activity of animals. Only for this reason is he a species-being. Or rather, he is only a self-conscious being, i.e. his own life is an object for him, because he is a species-being. Only for this reason is his activity free activity. Alienated labor reverses the relationship, in that man be-

cause he is a self-conscious being makes his life activity, his *being*, only a means for his *existence*.

The practical construction of an *objective world*, the *manipulation* of inorganic nature, is the confirmation of man as a conscious species-being, i.e. a being who treats the species as his own being or himself as a species-being. Of course, animals also produce. They construct nests, dwellings, as in the case of bees, beavers, ants, etc. But they only produce what is strictly necessary for themselves or their young. They produce only in a single direction, while man produces universally. They produce only under the compulsion of direct physical need, while man produces when he is free from physical need and only truly produces in freedom from such need. Animals produce only themselves, while man reproduces the whole of nature. The products of animal production belong directly to their physical bodies, while man is free in face of his product. Animals construct only in accordance with the standards and needs of the species to which they belong, while man knows how to produce in accordance with the standards of every species and knows how to apply the appropriate standard to the object. Thus man constructs also in accordance with the laws of beauty.

It is just in his work upon the objective world that man really proves himself as a *species-being*. This production is his active species life. By means of it nature appears as *his* work and his reality. The object of labor is, therefore, the *objectification of man's species life*; for he no longer reproduces himself merely intellectually, as in consciousness, but actively and in a real sense, and he sees his own reflection in a world which he has constructed. While, therefore, alienated labor takes away the object of production from man, it also takes away his *species life*, his real objectivity as a species-being, and

changes his advantage over animals into a disadvantage in so far as his inorganic body, nature, is taken from him.

Just as alienated labor transforms free and self-directed activity into a means, so it transforms the species life of man into a means of physical existence.

Consciousness, which man has from his species, is transformed through alienation so that species life becomes only a means for him.

(3) Thus alienated labor turns the *species life of man*, and also nature as his mental species-property, into an *alien* being and into a *means* for his *individual existence*. It alienates from man his own body, external nature, his mental life and his *human* life.

(4) A direct consequence of the alienation of man from the product of his labor, from his life activity and from his species life is that *man* is *alienated* from other *men*. When man confronts himself he also confronts *other* men. What is true of man's relationship to his work, to the product of his work and to himself, is also true of his relationship to other men, to their labor and to the objects of their labor.

In general, the statement that man is alienated from his species life means that each man is alienated from others, and that each of the others is likewise alienated from human life.

Human alienation, and above all the relation of man to himself, is first realized and expressed in the relationship between each man and other men. Thus in the relationship of alienated labor every man regards other men according to the standards and relationships in which he finds himself placed as a worker.

(XXV) We began with an economic fact, the alienation of the worker and his production. We have expressed this fact in conceptual terms as *alienated labor*, and in

analyzing the concept we have merely analyzed an economic fact.

Let us now examine further how this concept of alienated labor must express and reveal itself in reality. If the product of labor is alien to me and confronts me as an alien power, to whom does it belong? If my own activity does not belong to me but is an alien, forced activity, to whom does it belong? To a being *other* than myself. And who is this being? The *gods*? It is apparent in the earliest stages of advanced production, e.g., temple building, etc. in Egypt, India, Mexico, and in the service rendered to gods, that the product belonged to the gods. But the gods alone were never the lords of labor. And no more was *nature*. What a contradiction it would be if the more man subjugates nature by his labor, and the more the marvels of the gods are rendered superfluous by the marvels of industry, he should abstain from his joy in producing and his enjoyment of the product for love of these powers.

The *alien* being to whom labor and the product of labor belong, to whose service labor is devoted, and to whose enjoyment the product of labor goes, can only be *man* himself. If the product of labor does not belong to the worker, but confronts him as an alien power, this can only be because it belongs to *a man other than the worker*. If his activity is a torment to him it must be a source of enjoyment and pleasure to another. Not the gods, nor nature, but only man himself can be this alien power over men.

Consider the earlier statement that the relation of man to himself is first realized, objectified, through his relation to other men. If therefore he is related to the product of his labor, his objectified labor, as to an *alien*, hostile, powerful and independent object, he is related in

such a way that another alien, hostile, powerful and independent man is the lord of this object. If he is related to his own activity as to unfree activity, then he is related to it as activity in the service, and under the domination, coercion and yoke, of another man.

Every self-alienation of man, from himself and from nature, appears in the relation which he postulates between other men and himself and nature. Thus religious self-alienation is necessarily exemplified in the relation between laity and priest, or, since it is here a question of the spiritual world, between the laity and a mediator. In the real world of practice this self-alienation can only be expressed in the real, practical relation of man to his fellow-men. The medium through which alienation occurs is itself a *practical* one. Through alienated labor, therefore, man not only produces his relation to the object and to the process of production as to alien and hostile men; he also produces the relation of other men to his production and his product, and the relation between himself and other men. Just as he creates his own production as a vitiation, a punishment, and his own product as a loss, as a product which does not belong to him, so he creates the domination of the non-producer over production and its product. As he alienates his own activity, so he bestows upon the stranger an activity which is not his own.

We have so far considered this relation only from the side of the worker, and later on we shall consider it also from the side of the non-worker.

Thus, through alienated labor the worker creates the relation of another man, who does not work and is outside the work process, to this labor. The relation of the worker to work also produces the relation of the capitalist (or whatever one likes to call the lord of labor) to work. *Private property* is therefore the product, the nec-

essary result, of *alienated labor*, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself.

Private property is thus derived from the analysis of the concept of *alienated labor*; that is, alienated man, alienated labor, alienated life, and estranged man.

We have, of course, derived the concept of *alienated labor (alienated life)* from political economy, from an analysis of the *movement of private property*. But the analysis of this concept shows that although private property appears to be the basis and cause of alienated labor, it is rather a consequence of the latter, just as the gods are *fundamentally* not the cause but the product of confusions of human reason. At a later stage, however, there is a reciprocal influence.

Only in the final stage of the development of private property is its secret revealed, namely, that it is on one hand the *product* of alienated labor, and on the other hand the *means* by which labor is alienated, the *realization of this alienation.*

This elucidation throws light upon several unresolved controversies:

(1) Political economy begins with labor as the real soul of production and then goes on to attribute nothing to labor and everything to private property. Proudhon, faced by this contradiction, has decided in favor of labor against private property. We perceive, however, that this apparent contradiction is the contradiction of *alienated labor* with itself and that political economy has merely formulated the laws of alienated labor.

We also observe, therefore, that *wages* and *private property* are identical, for wages, like the product or object of labor, labor itself remunerated, are only a necessary consequence of the alienation of labor. In the wage system labor appears not as an end in itself but as the servant of wages. We shall develop this point later on

and here only bring out some of the (XXVI) consequences.

An enforced *increase in wages* (disregarding the other difficulties, and especially that such an anomaly could only be maintained by force) would be nothing more than a *better remuneration of slaves*, and would not restore, either to the worker or to the work, their human significance and worth.

Even the *equality of incomes* which Proudhon demands would only change the relation of the present day worker to his work into a relation of all men to work. Society would then be conceived as an abstract capitalist.

(2) From the relation of alienated labor to private property it also follows that the emancipation of society from private property, from servitude, takes the political form of the *emancipation of the workers*; not in the sense that only the latter's emancipation is involved, but because this emancipation includes the emancipation of humanity as a whole. For all human servitude is involved in the relation of the worker to production, and all the types of servitude are only modifications or consequences of this relation.

As we have discovered the concept of *private property* by an *analysis* of the concept of *alienated labor*, so with the aid of these two factors we can evolve all the categories of political economy, and in every category, e.g., trade, competition, capital, money, we shall discover only a particular and developed expression of these fundamental elements.

However, before considering this structure let us attempt to solve two problems.

(1) To determine the general nature of *private property* as it has resulted from alienated labor, in its relation to *genuine human and social property*.

(2) We have taken as a fact and analyzed the *aliena-*

tion of labor. How does it happen, we may ask, that *man alienates his labor*? How is this alienation founded in the nature of human development? We have already done much to solve the problem in so far as we have *transformed* the question concerning the *origin of private property* into a question about the relation between *alienated labor* and the process of development of mankind. For in speaking of private property one believes oneself to be dealing with something external to mankind. But in speaking of labor one deals directly with mankind itself. This new formulation of the problem already contains its solution.

ad (1) *The general nature of private property and its relation to genuine human property.*

We have resolved alienated labor into two parts, which mutually determine each other, or rather constitute two different expressions of one and the same relation. *Appropriation* appears as *alienation* and *alienation* as *appropriation*, alienation as genuine acceptance in the community.

We have considered one aspect, *alienated* labor, in its bearing upon the *worker* himself, i.e., *the relation of alienated labor to itself.* And we have found as the necessary consequence of this relation the *property relation* of the *non-worker* to the *worker* and to *labor. Private property* as the material summarized expression of alienated labor includes both relations; *the relation of the worker to labor, to the product of his labor and to the non-worker*, and the relation of the *non-worker to the worker and to the product of the latter's labor.*

We have already seen that in relation to the worker, who *appropriates* nature by his labor, appropriation appears as alienation, self-activity as activity for another and of another, living as the sacrifice of life, and production of the object as loss of the object to an alien power,

an alien man. Let us now consider the relation of this *alien* man to the worker, to labor, and to the object of labor.

It should be noted first that everything which appears to the worker as an *activity of alienation*, appears to the non-worker as a *condition of alienation*. Secondly, the *real, practical* attitude of the worker in production and to the product (as a state of mind) appears to the non-worker who confronts him as a *theoretical* attitude.

(XXVII) Thirdly, the non-worker does everything against the worker which the latter does against himself, but he does not do against himself what he does against the worker.

Let us examine these three relationships more closely.[2]

[2] The manuscript breaks off unfinished at this point.—*Tr. Note*

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